OCTOBER 1956

The Reformed Journal

A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT AND OPINION

S.F.T.S
LIBRARY

Nigeriana
By HARRY R. BOER

Toward a Theistic Creationism
By LEONARD VERDUIN

To Any Writer at Calvin College
By STEVE J. VAN DER WEELE

The Age of Science
By T. P. DIRKSE

Pages From the Past
By THE EDITORS

The Christian and the World
By BASTIAN KRUITHOF

Introducing Okke Jager
By JOHN VRIEND

Notes and Letters . . .

DEAR SIRS:

I should like to comment on Dr. Daane's criticism of *The Free Offer of the Gospel* in the September 1956 issue of *The Reformed Journal.*

Dr. Daane said, "As is well known, there is a radically different view of the free offer of the gospel taught at Westminster Seminary and tolerated by the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches." By whom is this well known? What is meant by "radically"? Dr. Daane assumed this statement to be a fact of reality without offering any proof or evidence to support it. The implication which follows from his statement is that the "radically different view of the free offer of the gospel" tolerated by the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches is unbiblical since he praised *The Free Offer of the Gospel.* If Mr. Daane's statement can be proved to be true, then I should like your readers to know what that "radically different view" is and see the evidence. However, if it cannot be proved to be true, then I should like your readers to know that too.

Richard Mills
Grand Rapids, Mich.

DEAR SIRS:

The difficulties of the Rev. L. Verduin mentioned in *The Reformed Journal* of September 1956 were solved long ago by H. De Wilde (*Om de Vrijheid*), and Westerbeek Van Eerten (*Anabaptisme en Calvinisme*). The first book is on Church and State in the Netherlands from Marnix to Kuyper (1905). It tells in detail what happened between 1572 and 1619. What Marnix and Beza thought and did before 1572 is important, but it is more important what they thought and did in 1572 and after. Even Barnouw in his short text, *The Making of Modern Holland,* tells that in 1572 the Catholics received equal rights with the Calvinists. This was the first time in

(*Continued on page* 23)

The Reformed Journa
A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT & OPINIO

Volume VI No

OCTOBER 1956

Editorial Board

HARRY R. BOER, JAMES DAANE, GEORGE STOB
HENRY STOB, HENRY ZYLSTRA

Publisher

William B. Eerdmans, Sr.

NIGERIANA
Dr. Harry R. Boer, *Director of Gindiri Theological Training School, Northern Nigeria, West Africa*

TOWARD A THEISTIC CREATIONISM
Rev. Leonard Verduin, *Minister of the Campus Chapel, Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

TO ANY ASPIRING WRITER AT CALVIN COLLEGE
Dr. Steve Van Der Weele, *Instructor in English, Calvin College.*

THE AGE OF SCIENCE — AN ASSESSMENT
Dr. Thedford P. Dirkse, *Professor of Chemistry, Calvin College.*

PAGES FROM THE PAST
Edited by Dr. George Stob

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD ACCORDING TO BAVINCK
Dr. Bastian Kruithof *Minister of the Beverly Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

INTRODUCING OKKE JAGER
Rev. John Vriend, *Minister of the Christian Reformed Church, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.*

NOTES AND LETTERS

PUBLISHED MONTHLY, excepting August, by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Pu lishing Company, at 231 Jefferson Avenue, S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Michiga Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Grand Rapids, Michiga

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: 25c per copy; $2.50 one year; $4.00 two yea

ADDRESS all subscriptions to Subscription Department, *The Reform Journal,* 231 Jefferson Avenue, S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. Addre all editorial and advertising communications to Managing Editor and Adve tising Manager respectively.

Managing Editor: Calvin P. Bulthuis; Advertising Manager: David Wynbee

Nigeriana

by Harry R. Boer

THERE IS PROBABLY NO COUNTRY in the world today in a greater state of transition than Nigeria. It is a country in which missions, the British government and commercial enterprises have invested a great deal of manpower and money. This interest and effort have now for some time shown substantial results. Doubtless one of the outstanding of these in the secular sphere is that Nigeria will shortly probably take its place in the ranks of the independent countries of the world.

The contact of the West with Nigeria could not but have the profoundest effects on the land and on its people. Before the coming of the white man Nigeria was a typical African area steeped in the customs, traditions, and beliefs of primitive societies. Mohammedanism had taken hold, but Mohammedanism was not and is not a progressive force.

What is the Nigeria of today like? No one essay can begin to fill out anything approaching an adequate picture. One meets on the streets of most of its towns evidences of the crudest primitivism and of the influence of western civilization, culture and religion. Perhaps it will be best, in showing what Nigeria is like today, to relate some typical experiences that I have had during the past eight months.

I am at present spending a couple of months in a town called Ibi. It lies on the Benue River and is situated some seventy miles north of Lupwe, our main mission station. It remained a small place for some years after its founding about eighty years ago, mushroomed while it served as a British government center, and lapsed back into the easy-going life of earlier days after the government took its departure to the more strategically situated Makurdi.

Ibi is mainly a Mohammedan town. At stated times during the day one can hear the Muezzin call the faithful to prayer. The Mohammedan call to prayer has something profoundly beautiful and moving about it when it is well executed. I have always felt that only a religion that has a powerful hold on the hearts of men could produce such a manifestation of its spirit. But there is another side to West African Mohammedanism also. It has imbibed as much from its converts as it has given them. Many Mohammedans wear fetishes as freely as pagans do. Of the various forms in which the Mohammedan-pagan mixture can express itself the following is a sample: I was walking down the main street of Ibi a few days ago when I saw a man writing on a slate. Some young men were standing around him. I walked over to greet and to inquire what he was doing.

"I am writing the name of the prophet," he said. I noticed that he had divided the slate into squares and was writing a name in Arabic in each square.

"Why are you writing the name of the prophet in each square?" I asked him.

"This young man is ill," the scribe told me, pointing to one of the by-standers. "If I write the name of the prophet in each square, wash the slate clean and catch the water in a cup and give it to him to drink, he will become well." All of this of course for a consideration.

This particular piece of unadulterated superstition is, I think, a rather common phenomenon in Mohammedan Africa, at least south of the Sahara. I had met it before in books, but this was the first time I actually saw the thing done before my eyes.

The old pagan Africa takes new forms adopted to the present situation. During a recent visit to Ibadan, one of the largest purely African cities on the continent, I was approached by a man and given an advertisement card with the following informations, among others, on it:

With the best compliments of:

AMIDA AKANJI
Minister of Mattresses
Quick and Efficient Work

Since there is a minister of education, a minister of public works, since there are ministers of the gospel, there seemed to be no good reason to Amida why there should not be a minister of mattresses. The card also contained the inevitable religious slogan: "Olorun logun Aseni," which is Yoruba and means, so I am told, God will inflict retribution on the evil-doer.

In Africa, "medicine" or "magani," also called "tsafi" (fetish), is the center of everything. A friend of mine who had a close call in avoiding a carelessly approaching car was approached by a witness who expressed amazement at his escape thus: "Boy, malam, you sure have tsafi." A more complex form is found in the following advertisement which I recently found along the highway

Nigeriana — Continued

in an area in which English is spoken to a considerable extent:

ROGERS DIVINE CULT

Diploma in Occultism, Psycho Physician and Hypnotist. The Leading Wizard of the East. Registration No. 24616.
Ensure your Life and Let be Punished they That Want to Harm You. Cure your diseases no matter how long and acute. End your Worries. Write for our Mystic or call in Person to

Prof. A. A. Rogers

The impact of the West on Africa comes to explicit expression very strongly in the change which the Hausa language is undergoing under the pressure of culture contact. How shall a language express things for the expression of which there just are no words or no adequate words or terms available? The only thing that can be done is to "Hausanize" given English words, and this process is going on apace, especially in the leading Hausa newspaper and in other government sponsored publications. The following are just a few of the adaptations that are going on all the time. Try putting your hand over the column on the right and figuring out what the words on the left mean. All of them are direct adaptations from the English:

kos	course
kwamiti	committee
minti	minute
awo	hour
kwal	coal
tirekta	tractor
giya	gear
gwammati	government
kwalbati	culvert
soja	soldier
kofer	corporal
saja	sergeant
sajamanja	sergeant-major
kimmiya	chemistry
woda	warden
deyare	diary
tafinta	interpreter

When one becomes somewhat acquainted with Hausa he understands how truly typical of Hausa enunciation these adaptations are. Sometimes these words are the ultimate in bafflement. Many of them are not in the Hausa-English dictionary and try as you will you cannot get to their meaning from the context, although the meaning fits perfectly once you know what it is. I remember distinctly the difficulty I had with *tirekta* and *kimmiya*. The word *giya* was even worse, for there is such a Hausa word which means beer. It always gives folk who know what these words mean boundless pleasure to help the uninitiated.

Some feel that we should not thus "de-Hausanize" the Hausa. They feel that although some adaptations to English are inevitable, much o what is now being done is unnecessary. The forget that a great deal of "English" came int being in the same way. Where in the good ol Anglo-Saxon will you find words like educatio logomachy, strategist, carburetor, submarin physiology, and thousands of others? If we ca adapt Greek and Latin to English why canno others adapt English to their needs?

No field of endeavor so effectively mediate the impact of the West on Nigeria as does the fiel of education. Let us take the Training Center a Gindiri with which I am at present associate Boys come here, often from bush schools, from a over Northern Nigeria and leave the teache training and secondary school sections with a goo command of English and a fair grounding in ger eral education. The better qualified among th secondary school men are ready for further prep aration to enter a university. Some will stud for doctor, others will take advanced work in som subject with a view to teaching it, and most of th others will enter upon office or technical career Gindiri's prestige is unsurpassed by any simila school in the Northern Region. Applications fo admission far outnumber those who can be re ceived. A girls' secondary school is now bein built.

What happens in the course of this education process happens to young men and women whos social background, except for the fact that it often Christian, lies close to the primitive leve The life and economy of most of their relatives in many instances little different than that of the forebears of a century ago. That is to say, durin the first thirty years of the life of many youn people in Nigeria the whole gamut of human pro ress from that of near primitive man to a moder university must be absorbed. Particularly are th strains telling when so much of the old social stru ture has to be taken along into the new way of li — I am thinking particularly of all that is assoc ated with marrige — unless the man wants sever all relationships with his family, and that about the last thing an African wants to do.

It would seem that education also enters large into Roman Catholic ecclesiastical and missiona planning in Nigeria. Their educational effort Eastern Nigeria (one of the three political regio of the country) is something to behold. Althoug the Roman Catholics are active everywhere th have apparently decided to concentrate their e forts on the conversion of the Ibo people. The Ib are by general consent the most aggressive of t peoples of Nigeria. They have become almost nightmare to the rulers of the Mohammedan Nor who see the vast majority of clerical positions

their domain, high or low, occupied by Protestant or Catholic Ibos. Here in little Ibi the Post Office and several of the largest business places are staffed or managed by Ibos.

On a trip which I recently took through the Eastern Region I was astounded at the incredible number of Roman Catholic primary schools that I saw. Advantageously situated, well built schools are found by the score along the more prominent highways. They offer education to all comers. Great inroads are being made upon the work of the Church Mission Society (Anglican) and there is no telling what the end of the Roman Catholic advance will be.

In their endeavor to put a Roman Catholic stamp on the country, particularly in Ibo land, elaborate plans have been laid for a Roman Catholic university in the Eastern Region. This school would therefore rival the government supported University College now functioning in Ibadan in the Western Region (but for the entire country).

We in the North cannot be indifferent to this development, particularly not in view of reports which seem not to be devoid of basis that the Mohammedans are planning to establish a university to the north of us in Kano. Obviously, both the Roman Catholics and the Mohammedans intend in a comprehensive manner to further the interests of their respective religions. In order for the Protestants of the North to maintain themselves and to expand effectively in the face of these adverse pressures we must meet these forces as comprehensively and unitedly as we can. One way in which this can be done is to establish *one* well staffed, well equipped theological training center. In no problem of missionary endeavor is it so necessary to view the situation in the light of the conditions on the field as it is in this area of endeavor. Both churches and missions on the field are convinced that a splintering of effort on this score among the small Protestant minority in the North would benefit only the forces opposing the growth of evangelical Christianity.

Finally, a word about the political situation. A conference of representatives of all shades of political opinion in Nigeria with British colonial administrators has been scheduled to meet in London some time in September of this year. The purpose of this conference is to take action on Britain's offer of complete independence. There is little doubt here that the offer will be accepted and that independence will go into effect in 1959. The country is already to a large extent self-governing. The minister of education in the North, for instance, is a Mohammedan and his chief secretary and advisor is a Britisher. The educational know-how of the latter far exceeds that of the minister, but final decisions are the African's, not the European's. So it goes down most of the line.

Recently an unhappy circumstance made necessary a postponement of the London conference. Dr. N. Azikiwe, the prime minister of the Eastern Region, is finding himself in difficulties and this is leading to all kinds of complications. He is American educated, a colorful and ever a controversial figure, adored and blindly followed by his six million fellow Ibo countrymen. Just now he is under official British scrutiny in that a commission of inquiry has been appointed to investigate his connection with an all-African bank which he helped to establish. The matter is very complex and so serious that it has led to the postponement of the much heralded London conference. Should the result of the investigation be unfavorable for Dr. Azikiwe it will be difficult to foresee the political repercussions.

In any case, the independence of Nigeria will not mean less but more problems for the country. How the three Regions (Eastern, Western, and Northern) are ever to become a united nation no one professes to understand. The Yorubas of the West, the Ibos of the East, and the Hausas of the North, each exercising a hegemony over scores of smaller tribes, will not soon coalesce into one people. There is a central federal government, but the center of gravity in all Nigerian politics lies in the three Regions severally.

When Nigerians speak to me about this situation I always point to the thirteen American colonies which after the Revolutionary War were nearly as divided as so many independent countries, yet are now a great united nation. But I accuse myself of a bit of tongue-in-cheek as I do so. There was in the Colonies a common language, a common West European culture, and a common Christian religious commitment which was chiefly Protestant in character. Here there is no common language, the tribal consciousness is vital and powerful, paganism is still strong, and there hangs over the land as a pall the power of Mohammedanism which is spreading, especially in the West in which the great city of Ibadan is economically to a large extent controlled by Mohammedans.

In this land of contrasts and problems of magnitude on all fronts the Christian Church continues to present her witness. Especially is this a heavy and responsible task in the North, where a minority of about 300,000 Christians live in the midst of 18,000,000 Mohammedans and pagans. The need of the hour is a church leadership commensurate with the responsibilities that confront the Church.

Initial plans have now been completed to meet this need in the form of a theological school to serve the entire Church in the North. In forthcoming articles I hope to reflect on the character and particularly on the necessity of this school.

Toward a Theistic Creationism*

by Leonard Verduin

"EVEN THE WRATH OF MAN shall praise Him" says the believer with a glance at the Scripture that gives him warrant for saying it.

This passage from Scripture means that even the activities of sinful men have a place in the overall program of God. Cyrus the Persian may not have known it, and had he known it he might not have liked it, but he was nevertheless a man in God's employ.

John Calvin referred to the revolutionary spirits of his day with their radicalism in the realm of economics as "firebrands from hell"; but he added that they were nevertheless being employed by God to make the people of that age sensitive to the gross evils that they were condoning in the area of economic life. If we are good disciples of this John Calvin we will not be outraged at all if it is suggested that the rise of communism in our times is again God's way of sensitizing us in an area where we have long been callous.

Is perhaps the rise of evolutionism in the 19th century similarly intended by God to teach His people something they seemed unlikely to learn in any other way? Is evolutionism perhaps God's way of sensitizing us in an area where we have long been less than fully Christian? For the writer of these lines this suggestion is neither irreverent nor fanciful. He wishes to acknowledge openly that evolutionism has sensitized him to truths and emphases that would perhaps have remained hidden if the theory of evolution had not been promulgated.

The purpose of this paper is to share with the reader some insights thus gained, in the hope that they may be useful and beneficial to Bible-believing Christians as they seek in the contemporary scene to find their way in regard to the problem of origins. The writer is inclined to think that what is said in this discussion may be not without usefulness to theologian and Christian scientist alike. Both of these experts have this assignment in common that they must face without obscurantism the known facts in the realm of nature. They also share with each other the duty of giving to the Bible such right-of-way as rightfully belongs to it. To do violenc knowingly to the data of either of the two "books of which the Belgic Confession speaks in its Articl 2 is serious sin. And to be complacent in the pres ence of seeming contradictions between the two i extremely irreverent, to say the least.

To carry our argument forward we shall have t discuss *definitions*. When we deal with definition responsibly it will become apparent that not every thing that has been labeled *creationism* is acceptabl to authentic Christian thinking, and that not a that has been called *evolutionism* is objectionabl to it.

Let's begin with the definition of the concep of creation.

Most of us will recall from our childhood th question, "What is it to create?" as well as the an swer, "To create is to make something out o nothing." This definition is good as far as it goe It is a good definition with which to *begin*. Even child should be taught to recite it. But as he grow older he will have to adopt a more sophisticate definition of creation.

The reason for this is that the Biblical data re quires it. Not all it has to say to us about origin is adequately stated with the formula, "To mak something out of nothing." Sometimes the Boo calls it creation when it was not *ex nihilo*, "out o nothing." The Bible speaks of creation in the sens of *ex nihilo* in Genesis 1:1; likewise in Hebrew 11:3. But the Bible also calls it creation when th Creator in His creating takes recourse to alread existing materials, as in the case of Genesis 2 and 2:11f., for example.

Our definition of creation will therefore have t be more complicated than, "To create is to mak something out of nothing." It will have to be ad justed so that it makes room for creation in th sense of "a creative activity of God done with re course to already existing creaturehood."

At this point we will have to do what theologian always do when they get stuck — and not on theologians; we will have to use two terms whe we have used only one heretofore. In fact, the logians have long ago coined the terms we need. A handbooks on theology employ such terms as "pr mary" and "secondary" creation; or, "immediat and "mediate" creation. The former of each these pairs of terms stands for creation in the sen of "out of nothing" and the latter is used to signi

*This essay, which will be concluded in next month's *Journal*, is the substance of a paper read last year before The Guild of Calvinistic Scholars. It is appearing concurrently, in English, in *Geloof en Wetenschap*, official organ of the *Vereniging van Natuur- en Geneeskundigen in Nederland.* Reprints of this European printing may be had at 25c per copy from the author. The essay, which the *Journal* is happy to present in two installments, discloses central issues in the current discussion about Creation and Evolution.

creation in the sense of creation "with recourse to already existing materials."

It is time the question is seriously asked in Reformed circles whether we have not all too commonly paid only lip-service to the idea of creation in its secondary sense, perhaps even reluctant lip-service at that. For all practical purposes the neat distinction between immediate and mediate creation has usually been dropped about as soon as made. Many Reformed thinkers have either failed to sense the significance of the doctrine of mediate creation or — and this would be even worse — have because of an ethnic bias in their souls shied away from working out the implications of this doctrine so clearly laid down in Scripture.

The writer of these lines is quite convinced that it is high time to shake ourselves free from the tentacles of a non-Christian vestige that all too frequently evinces itself whenever we discuss the matter of origins. When we proceed as though that which can rightfully be predicated of *immediate* creation can also be predicated of *mediate* creation then we are setting out in a seriously objectionable direction; and the outcome will be a theology of origins that is in important aspects quite in error.[1]

One of the features of this objectionable theology is the treatment given in it to *time*. Ever since St. Augustine wrote that creation was "*non in tempore sed cum tempore*" ("not in time but with time") time has been treated as though it were a dimension that began after creation had ended. Under the influence of Augustine's dictum men have dealt with creation as an activity that antedated time. This is a serious error. It is a construct which the Bible is at considerable pains to obviate. It may verily be said that nothing is set forth more plainly in the Genesis record than that God's creative activity and the passing of time were *contemporary;* days and nights (whether "days" be taken to mean solar days or aeons of time) were already following each other in regular sequence all the while that the Creator was busily engaged in mediate creation. St. Augustine's dictum may be allowed to stand when it is taken to refer to primary creation; it is to be rejected when the reference is to what we call mediate or secondary creation. Mediate creation was decidedly *in tempore.*

Closely related to this highly objectionable treatment of *time* is a second objectionable feature, one that immediately follows from the former, namely, the sub-Christian treatment given to *process.* He who denies or fails to confess that creation (in its secondary sense) was *in tempore,* cannot admit that creation had a processional dimension; he will be inclined to the view that creation and process are mutually exclusive concepts. It need surprise no one that adherents of the less-than-Christian view of creation which we are rebuking think they smell fire and brimstone whenever the dimension of process is ascribed to God's creative activity. The reason for this revulsion against the ascription of the dimension of process to the concept of creation is that in this theology religion is thought to feed not so much on the dimension of process as on the dimension of the non-processional, the irruptive, or the ictic.[2] Because in America orthodoxy has been largely a matter of insisting upon the ictic aspects of God's redemptive dealings with men and unorthodoxy, conversely, largely a matter of denying the ictic, therefore the controversy over evolutionism (a system of thought that "processizes" everything) has in America been unusually bitter.[3] The theology which we are just now rebuking tries frantically to keep at least some terrain free from the dimension of process; the area known as the *locus de creatione* seemed to be such terrain; and for this reason this would-be-orthodoxy is greatly perturbed when-

---

1. The language of our Reformed Creeds could, and should, be improved in regard to the matter in hand. The Belgic Confession in its first sentence of Article XII should be recast so that the "of nothing" can no longer be construed with "all creatures" but only with "heaven" and with "earth." As this sentence stands at present it is in conflict with the first sentence of Article XIV which says that "God created man out of the dust of the earth." A similar improvement should be made in the answer to Question 26 of the Heidelberg Catechism. As it now stands the Catechism says that not only "heaven and earth" but also "all that is in them" were made "of nothing," a statement that needs clarification and rectification, seeing that it is evident from God's Word that God did *not* make Adam "of nothing."

2. The words "irruptive," "irruption," and "irruptional" are, of course, from the Latin *in* plus *rumpere.* The latter Latin verb denotes a breaching or a breaking. In combination with *in* it therefore denotes a breaking-in or a breaking-into.

The word "ictic," once in common use in theological discussion in America, is from the Latin word *icere* meaning "to strike." It was coined to designate the irruptive stroke of power wielded by a sovereign Creator upon His creature. In our present discussion "irruptive" and "ictic" may be considered synonymous.

3. The tensions between "Fundamentalism" and "Modernism" in the American scene can best be understood if we see the former as a theology in the signature of irruption and the latter a theology in the signature of process. The Second Coming of Christ occupies the central place in typically Fundamentalist theology because that Coming is thought to be wholly ictic. It should be noted that the Bible hastens to add however that the Coming is nevertheless related to process and contingent upon history; for the Coming, too, there is such a thing as the "fulness of time." In the Perfectionist areas of Fundamentalism sanctification (in authentic Christian theology a thing in which *process* is the outstanding feature) has been made to be ictic, a "second benefit" at the hand of a God who breaks-in. Modernism, of which Horace Bushnell was an early if not the earliest exponent, was an understandable rebellion against America's erstwhile icticism. And Fundamentalism is in turn an understandable rebellion against this rebellion. Needless to say, Fundamentalism will not be kindly disposed to the doctrine of the Covenant and to Covenantal theology as such; the latter is too friendly toward process for dogmatic Fundamentalism.

ever the dimension of process is predicated of this *locus*. Because this less-than-Christian theology proceeds upon the assumption that true religion starves unless fed a diet of ictic materials, therefore it imagines that to grant that creation has a processional dimension is to yield a last bastion to the enemy.

The Bible, however, places no such premium upon the irruptional. The Good Book sets its face as a flint against any representation that would tend to make the processional less contributory to true religion than is the ictic. Not that it does not know the formula of icticism which we are rebuking. It knows it only too well — in the hearts of men who have not had the benefit of special revelation. It brings us face to face with the classic formula of icticism — on the lips of Pharaoh's sorcerers who were quite composed in the presence of the "signs" of Moses and Aaron as long as they saw, or thought they saw, the dimension of process in them, but cried out in rapture when they thought they detected the irruptive, saying, in ecstasy, "This is the hand of God!" How far this less-than-Christian devaluation of the processive on Christian soil, and this equally less-than-Christian glorification of the irruptive, has departed from the thought habits of the Christ who ran away from the miracle-chasers of His day with their maudlin thirst for the ictic and who pointed to the falling of a sparrow from the house-top the rather as revelatory of "the finger of God," and to the lilies, matters in which the processional is prominent enough![4]

Closely related to its devaluation of the processional in comparison with the irruptional, the school of theology which we are just now repudiating has gone far in *depersonalizing* the process, so rendering it secular. With the non-Christian its adherents say that "*It* rains," that "*It* snows," or, that "*Nature* is prodigal with seed," little realizing that this is actually heretical language. The Bible teaches us to say, "He calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out on the face of the earth"; or, "He scattereth His hoarfrost like ashes." Th less-than-Christian representation of which we ar complaining sees, quite correctly, that in "Nature there is a processional dimension; and, because i thinks that religion is built up primarily on matter that have the irruptional dimension, therefore i gauges a man's orthodoxy by what he has to say i connection with supposedly solely irruptional mat ters, such as "creation" and "miracle," rather tha with what he has to say about that which has th dimension of process upon it. The processional i for this school of thought not directly pertinent fo matters of religion; for it the time to confess ha come when we are face to face with irruption.

This ethnic construction parading in the uni form of Biblical Christianity has wrought fright ful damage in the culture of which we are a par With its derogation of the processional and its ex altation of the irruptional it has paved the wa for the rise, by way of reaction, of an atheistic evo lutionism that has already grabbed many a promis ing youth. Goethe, the great German poet, ofte called the first modern man, was an immanentis who for that reason had an eye only for that whic is processional; but Goethe in his development ha merely gone over to this paganism from an *othe* paganism that sought to build its house of irruptiv materials. His pantheism was the natural outcom of his revulsion against a Christianity in the signa ture of the irruptional, an understandable if not justifiable swing of the pendulum. One does no have to endorse Goethe's cult of the processional a he applauds the great German's fulmination agains the contemporary cult of the ictic:

Was war' ein Gott, der nur von auszen stiesse,
Im Kreis das All am Finger laufen liesse!
Ihm ziemt's, die Welt im Inneren zu bewegen,
Natur in sich, sich in Natur zu hegen,
So dasz, was in ihm lebt und webt und ist
Nie seine Kraft, nie seinen Geist vermiszt!

Goethe seems to have been of the opinion — an this he had learnt from the "orthodoxy" agains which he rebelled — that we are dealing here with matter of *entweder-oder,* that men must choose b tween irruption and process, that if we grant th processional we shall have to deny the irruption and vice versa. The "orthodoxy" in which he ha been reared doted on the irruption, on a God wh poked at things from the outside; the new "orth doxy" which he proposed was one in the signatu of process, with a God who was indissociable fro process. The question is whether we are actuall called upon to make this choice, whether indeed w are permitted to make it.

This is the ancient problem of deism, pantheism and theism. Deism is a system in which the pr

---

4. The Bible has a way (born of its ambition to make theists of us, I take it) of introducing the processional dimension precisely when the irruptive dimension is in evidence. Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus is plainly a matter in which the irruptive is prominently present; but the Heavenly Voice speaks of the difficulty Paul was encountering in his policy (of long standing) of "kicking against the pricks," that is, of resisting the Spirit's promptings. This takes us right back to the processional dimension.

So, too, in the case of Elijah who, just as he is chiding the Almighty for His failure to come through with a sufficiently irruption, is given an assignment that takes him right back to process and the historic sequences — he must anoint his own successor, and a heathen king whose regime will contribute to a long-range program.

vailing line is that of transcendence; it is friendly toward irruption and averse to process. Pantheism, on the other hand, is a system in which the prevailing line is that of immanence; it is friendly toward the process and averse to irruption. Theism refuses to put all its eggs in either of the two baskets.

This theism is, moreover, not a system in which transcendence and immanence are alternating relationships. In Christian theism God's immanence is never at the cost of His transcendence and in it God's transcendence is never at the expense of His immanence. In Christian theism immanence and transcendence do not take turns, as do the green and the red light at the intersection. One does not occur as a result of the cancellation of the other; they are not consecutive relationships but two different aspects of a single relationship. In Christian theism there is therefore no room for sheer transcendence and no place for sheer immanence. For our present purpose Christian theism implies that although we may continue to speak of irruption and of process we may not intend thereby a sequence in which the one displaces the other. That would be like trying to be a theist by being a deist during the odd hours of the day and a pantheist during the even hours! The irruptive and the processive are not two separate relationships; rather are they, like the warp and the woof of a single fabric, two dimensions of the single relationship of Creator and creature.[5]

5. Under the influence of a deistically slanted creationism an undue antithesis between the theological item of creation and that of providence commonly develops, and the intimate connection and continuity between them drops out of sight. Our Reformed fathers could not mention the doctrine of creation without sliding forthwith into the doctrine of providence. To the question as to what men mean when they say, "I believe in God the Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth," they replied: "That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus who has created heaven and earth. . . . and still upholds them." Our Reformed fathers would not have thought of dealing with creation as something in the signature of transcendence and providence as something in the signature of immanence, the former inexplicable and the latter not so, the former mysterious and the latter non-mysterious. For them providence was in a significant way an elongation of the same almighty power that we encounter in creation.

To Any Aspiring Writer at Calvin College

by Steve J. Van Der Weele

DEAR FRIEND:

I have noticed the frequent appearance of your name in the columns of the publications of Calvin College, sometimes in a report of one or another of the artistic projects undertaken by our school, but more often in an account of the literary ventures which it sponsors. Moreover, I have spoken to you informally now and again, and have chatted with your friends several times, about the problems that confront Calvin students when they display an interest in the arts. I have been doing some additional reading and thinking about the problem recently, and thought I would share my reflections with you.

I should like to say first of all that it is with justifiable envy that my colleagues and I observe your growing skill in the artistic presentation of reality. Most of us have to be content to express our thoughts in flat, one-dimensional statements. You have been given the gift to transcend this limitation. You speak and write with imagination and feeling; you reinforce your observations and insights with emotive power. The Reformed community needs you. You can do much for us. You can demonstrate for us the point of view that prevailed in happier days, that the intuition and the imagination are just as legitimate as the sciences as approaches to reality. You can train us to avoid posing moral problems abstractly and theoretically, by concretizing them in creatures of flesh and blood. You can re-vitalize reality for us, giving us fresh insights, and making us see in a new light those things "we have passed perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see." Pierce the sluggish torso of our mundane existence and prod us on to continual wonder and delight at this amazing universe in which our Creator has placed us. Through your imaginative powers, teach us to see the essential and the significant in the confusing welter of human experience.

You have given us every indication that you wish to be a Christian writer. This is commendable and noble. However, do not expect us to make a fuss over you about this wish, or to lionize you on that account. By your determination to place your gifts at the disposal of the Christian community, you are acknowledging the obvious truth that this community does have a claim upon you. You are being

Any Aspiring Writer — Continued

motivated, I like to think, by a genuine love for the saints. As it is for them, the quest for holiness, that is, the continual development of the whole man in response to grace, must be central in your life. Your every artistic effort is to be subjected to the Word and the Spirit of God. You are not exempt from any of the claims and none of the injunctions which He has laid upon the whole of mankind, but especially upon the royal priesthood to which He calls His people. Therefore, as you whet your powers of perception and reflection, be intensely concerned as well with developing the Christian mind — the moral, intellectual, and volitional consciousness imbued with a Christian sensitivity. Read much. Steep yourself especially in the literary monuments of Christian writers. Let their works penetrate into your soul. Let them be determinative for the direction which your spiritual growth and maturity will take. There is an embarrassing amount of riches here to stimulate you to a Christian vision and interpretation of life and reality, from the literature of early Europe, when Christianity provided the patterns of thought and determined the consciousness and the sensibility of civilization, to writers of more recent times, such as Eliot, Auden, Greene, Waugh, Mauriac, Bernanos, and others. There is no better way than such reading to develop and refine both the conscious and unconscious levels of your mind and spirit.

I regard these preceding injunctions as an essential preface to what I intend to say shortly about the range of experience open to the Christian writer. You see, I am trying to erect barriers against a temptation to which artists have been especially prone. You know the maxim which goes like this: "That which is best, when corrupted, becomes the worst." I am trying to steel you against those attacks of pride, high-mindedness, artistic arrogance, a scorn for your fellowmen, a contempt for all those less talented than you — which often beset artists. May I recommend, too, the kind of detachment displayed by Shakespeare when he said, "A thing slipped idly from me," and by the architects of the great medieval cathedrals who were content to leave their work anonymous. Work hard at your writing, but be a bit casual about the product. Humility is especially becoming in a writer.

I have so far concerned myself with you as a man rather than as a writer. I have done so for a reason. For it is only when I am confident that you are sincere in your wish to say the true thing, to love the beautiful thing, to do the courageous thing, that I dare to take the risk I am about to take. That risk is this, to designate all of created reality as available to the literary artist, from the glories of the snow-capped mountains to a description of thos living on the fringes of society in wretchedness an sin; from a concern with the quickening powers o life that surge through the earth in the spring time to the exposure of hypocrisy wherever it is present from depicting all the variegated beauty in fountai and stream and the heavenly bodies, to penetratin the psychological abnormalities and twisted per sonalities of men who live among us and who shar our humanity. St. Augustine wrote, "Love Go and do what you please." I have sufficient confi dence in you to paraphrase this and say, "Love Go and write what you please, just as I dare say to th Christian reader, "Love God and read what yo please." (Do not, of course, make the mistake o thinking that one's love of God can exist apart fro love of one's fellow-man. I John 4:20 is the prope corrective for such a danger.) We will have to le it go at that. We are not able ultimately to judg your intentions. Out of the heart are the issues o life.

I am aware, too, that you will need freedom in th treatment of your subject, freedom to experiment freedom to impose form upon the experiences yo are examining, freedom to manipulate your dat until they speak the message you would have u hear.

Let me share with you some observations mad by one of our Dutch kinsmen, W. J. C. Buitendyke on the subject of artistic freedom. (You will fin these observations in "Calvinisme en Kunst in d Huidige Tijd," *Ontmoeting*, 1948-1949, pp. 365 ff. He subscribes heartily to the notion of complet freedom for the artist to treat his subject accordin to his own vision and insight. He makes much o the idea of play, of fantasy, of the kindled imagina tion, accounting such activity as a participation i the divine play of God Himself, as recorded in suc passages as Psalm 104, Proverbs 8, and Genesi 2:19. Incidentally, Buitendyke likes to see Chris tian writers in possession of such a buoyancy an zest for living, and feels that there is no room fo morbidity or cynicism in the Christian personality He points out further that the special media for th literary artists are words, meter, rhyme, and all th riches of the great storehouse of language, includin the amazing phenomenon of imagery. He argue convincingly that aesthetic creeds formulated b other writers are not necessarily binding for th Christian author. Even the predilection of Calvi and Calvinism for the sober, the restrained, the re resentational in art is not necessarily binding upo the contemporary Christian artist. (Whlie we are o the subject of Calvin's aesthetics, let me direct yo to one of the finest studies on the subject, *L'Esth tique de Calvin* by Leon Wencelius. He informs u that these five principles loom large in Calvin aesthetic consciousness: (1) a sense or correct ide

of the object; (2) an invitation to the writer to efface himself when he is confronted with the greatness of his task; (3) an appeal to simplicity and sobriety; (4) an appeal to a well-balanced view of reality; (5) a desire for clarity and purity. These quite obviously make good sense. However, as Rijnsdorp and others as well as Buitendyke point out, these principles rather reflect French classicism than serve as a universally binding aesthetic creed.)

What Buitendyke has been saying is that outside the requirement that the moral structure of the universe be recognized, there is no human prescription for the Calvinistic artist. However, he reminds us, this is no abstract freedom we should claim for art. No writer may say anything he pleases about any subject that comes to his mind. This freedom is not an end in itself, but a pre-condition for the artist to set forth his insights and share with us his imaginative interpretation of existence. The artist, says Buitendyke, is permitted to reconstruct nature, and need not imitate it merely. Moreover, the artist has a wide range of styles to choose from. Although every style has its peculiar danger, no style is in itself to be avoided; each one has contributed something to the enrichment of humanity, each one has stimulated artistic activity and has helped to form the variegated pattern of which the totality of human artistic creativity consists. He observes further that we who honor the leading of God in history and in culture, and who insist that God never delivers the world completely into the hand of the devil, must recognize that contemporary styles are valid, too; that, in fact, if the Christian artist is to make any impact at all, he and his style must be "on time." Indeed, a Calvinist *avant-garde* is a distinct possibility in our conception of history and providence. So much for Buitendyke. But I should like to end this subject by quoting a line from C. Rijnsdorp, member of a group of Christian Dutch writers and a historian of Dutch literature, who endorses Buitendyke's point of view, and adds: "The glory of the King does not consist in shutting one's eyes to the multiplicity of possibilities."

You sense, of course, that we are now on controversial territory. I have suggested that the Christian artist has the liberty to picture human life in its atrocities as well as in its aspiration to sainthood. You are to remember, of course, that your religious commitment gives you no choice but to place your writings convincingly, in their terminal impact, either directly or obliquely, on the side of morality, in league with the good. To give final approbation to demonic evil is to distort the nature of things.

And now I anticipate your question. I hear you ask: "What am I to say to those parents who declare vehemently that my material is not fit for their children to read, that, indeed, they are engaged in a campaign to remove obscene literature from drug stores, and that my book (or story, or whatever) hinders rather than helps their cause?" Assuming now that your piece does reflect that Christian consciousness and spirit that I have been pleading for throughout this letter, we shall have to say, as Buitendyke points out, that our problem here is educational rather than aesthetic. I share with you a certain perplexity that our people, so thoroughly committed to the doctrine of original sin, should recoil so when the printed page attempts an analysis of sin, seeks to ferret it out, tries to define it, and attempts to trace its progress as it works its relentless way through the mind and the life of the characters who inhabit your book or story. We shall have to say to these parents that if novelists are to address themselves to the mentality of teen-agers, as the advertising experts do, then all we can expect is a superficial and innocuous, and, therefore, inauthentic kind of literature. We must tell them that much as we sympathize with them in the rearing of their children — and they do have tremendous problems these days — nevertheless, they, the parents, will have to insure that certain books, just as certain drugs and medicines, will have to be kept out of reach. I am quite convinced that an undissimulating and realistic presentation of human life and experience, within the limitations I have specified, is not a violation of artistic responsibility.

Quite obviously, this is not to say that you have the right to select incendiary situations and subjects for the sake of exploiting popular taste. That would be to use your freedom irresponsibly. Should you choose, for example, to deal with one or another of the responses possible in the relationship between men and women, treat these relationships as a symbol of the deeper currents of your characters; make them an indication of their general integration towards all of life and reality, or a lack of such integration. A sex-drenched novel written merely to be clever is really quite frivolous and boring. It may sell well, and there may even be some pedagogy in it. However, it is not worthy the concern of a Christian. Your assignment should always be, insofar as possible, and in terms of the genre you have chosen and the kind of thing you are doing, to reflect a Christian attitude or answer or sensitivity. This attitude or sensitivity, quite obviously, can be expressed more fully in a long than in a short piece. If you are writing a slight thing, say, a sonnet of description, you, and we, will have to be content only with a point of view which is not hostile to Christianity. It is difficult to prescribe for this in the abstract, but you get my meaning.

Any Aspiring Writer — Continued

PERMIT me to touch on one more matter. It is in the nature of a challenge. G. K. Chesterton observed somewhere that twentieth-century writers have become uncanny in their ability to depict all the fine shades and nuances of evil, while at the same time they have lost their ability to depict nobility, strength of character, moral excellence. My suggestion to you is this: Do not be so blinded by the fact of evil that you lose the other dimension, all those manifestations of both general and redemptive grace which are just as real and dramatic as the demonic forces which pervade so much of present literature, although with admittedly impressive results. I challenge you to the difficult feat of paying attention to the process of spiritual maturation, of growth in grace. It is difficult to do, and only comparatively few writers have done it successfully. What makes it possible is the fact of divine power and the reality of the Spirit. Do not leave us with the nausea of existentialism as the only answer to life, nor with enslavement to sensuality and the instincts triumphant. Nor should you permit an audacious defiance of divine norms, nor let a numbing despair and comfortlessness have th last word. Exhibit to us the preserving and salt tary grace of God at work in His creation and H creatures.

My reflections on the subject of the literary artis are coming to a close. This letter has perhaps bee too long. Calvin displayed a healthy intuition in h refusal to discourse at any length on the subject o aesthetics. He sensed that about all that most o us can do is to stand on the sidelines and wait fo the artistic event to happen. He was content larg ly with pointing out that the center of art is the in effable beauty and majesty of God, that all beaut is a reflection of His glory. With that thought leave you, together with one further word fro Browning, expressed through his mouthpiece, Fr Lippo Lippi:

God's works — paint any one and count it crime
To let a truth slip . . .
This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good —
To find its meaning is my meat and drink . . .
Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out.

S.J.V.D.W.

The Age of Science

An Assessment

by T. P. Dirkse

TO MANY PEOPLE TODAY the field of Science offers the hope of the millenium. For such people, Science is the means by which all the world's ills can be cured. And that not without cause, for Science has an impressive record. Think, for example, how Science has identified and conquered diseases too numerous to mention. This is by no means the only achievement of Science. It has produced many advances in other fields, e.g., communications, transportation, refrigeration. It is only natural, then, that people begin to look to this field of accomplishment for the solutions to their own problems. It is easy to be cheered by the great achievements of Science, for these achievements have often been accomplished in the face of what seemed insurmountable obstacles. What is more natural, then, that we, when faced with problems, difficulties, and frustrations in other fields, should turn with longing eyes to Science and say: "Just what have you got that we haven't?"

The most obvious answer, and a very commo one, to that inquiry is that Science has a metho ology all its own. If that is so, then it is only logic to suppose that that methodology peculiar to it responsible for its wondrous and enviable feat And if this be true, what is more logical than t borrow that methodology for other fields? So w daily hear the cry of leaders and non-leaders i politics, sociology, and even religion: "We must b scientific!" Presumably our hope is that if we a but scientific we shall some day match, in othe fields of human endeavor, the triumphs of Scien in its own field.

We may summarize this all by saying that we a living in the Scientific Age. Science has made terrific impact on our lives. If your company wan to increase its sale of cigarettes, you merely adve tise that *your* cigarettes are scientifically teste It then goes without saying that your cigarett must be the best. If a newspaper wants to increas

its circulation, it tells the people that it gathers news scientifically. But perhaps the most telling fact of all is that nowadays the endorsement of a scientist is almost as good as that of a currently popular movie star.

Science has marched into the field of education and in some instances almost taken over the whole field. Even schools which are primarily interested in other fields must make room in the curriculum for courses in Science. A great deal of time has been spent in various educational committees in various educational institutions to determine what share of the curriculum must be given over to Science before a graduate can be said to be educated. At the present time there are schools in America in which more than half of an undergraduate's time is given over to courses in Science.

The rise of the Age of Science has not left the Christian unmoved. Perhaps it has made a greater impact upon him than upon his fellowmen. The thoughtful man of God has often been puzzled, perhaps even shaken, by the authority with which Science speaks. For the authority of Science often seems to undermine the authority of the Bible. A so-called conflict — which often seems very real — has arisen between Science and Religion. The conclusions of the scientists with respect to the origin of the earth and of life seem to be at variance with those of the theologians. This has disturbed many a Christian.

As a matter of fact we are living in the Age of Science. The man of the world is affected by it. The Christian is shaken by it. The common man's life has been enhanced by it. The thinking man's life may be harassed by it. But here we are. We can't help it. We can't escape it. At times most of us, perhaps all of us, may wish that we lived in the Middle Ages. But we certainly ought to face the situation with a bit more courage, humor, and realism than to wish to have our lot cast in ages long past. There is no need that any of us should resign ourselves thoughtlessly to the Age of Science.

WHEN one seeks to determine the reason for the rise of Science to such a dominating place of power, the answer often given is again, that it has a methodology all its own and in that methodology lies the secret of its success. Most any Science textbook will give a description of this method. These descriptions talk about gathering data, formulating hypotheses, testing hypotheses, and finally formulating laws. The descriptions are written with the usual amount of jargon and scientific piety. Furthermore, the claim is made that the virtue of the scientific method and the key to its success is the objectivity and complete lack of prejudice with which each problem is approached. On reading these accounts of the scientific method and the work of scientists one is almost driven to the conclusion that a scientist is some type of unfallen angel. Listen to this man of Science as he confidently expounds the faith that is in him. "As more and more people gain a sound understanding of the nature of the scientific method and learn to apply it in the solution of the problems of everyday life, we may hope for an improvement in the social, political, and international affairs of the world. Technical progress represents one way in which the world can be improved through science. The other way is through the social progress that results from application of the scientific method — through the development of 'moral science'; and I believe that the study of science, the learning of the scientific method by all people, will ultimately help the people of the world in the solution of our great social and political problems" (L. Pauling, *General Chemistry,* Freeman, 1953, p. 15). What need we more? Here we have our golden calf — our sacred cow.

But isn't it ironical that in spite of all this delightful optimism this Age of Science seems to be dominated by one overwhelming emotion: *Fear?* Every bookstore has a dozen books on how to get rid of it. Apparently the recipes aren't scientific. They don't seem to work. We are now in the Atomic Age we are told. Greater wonders than heretofore are promised. Some of them we are indeed seeing performed. But beyond, beneath, and along with all the marvelous things present and to come, the spectre of atomic destruction haunts us. And we just wonder whether we would not much rather do without the wonders.

How can such optimism and such fear be present at one and the same time? Isn't it psychologically impossible? The answer is, I believe, that much of the optimism is false and that the descriptions of the scientific method and of the scientists are unreal. For instance, there is this claim of complete objectivity on the part of the scientist. Because of this, so the argument runs, the scientist can truly study a problem and arrive at a satisfactory solution. At this very point one may properly question whether such an open mind guarantees a sound understanding of a problem. However, be that as it may, my purpose here is to consider this contention that the mind of a scientist is unfettered when he is functioning as a scientist. An important consideration and a very real fact is that the scientist is a human being. And he continues to be human when he enters his laboratory. Another fact is that prejudices are a part of the human personality. They rest in the heart of the individual. Each person has beliefs or disbeliefs with respect to nature round about him, with respect to his fellow men, and even with respect to the world of the spirit. Each scientist, by virtue of his humanity, is blessed

or saddled with these beliefs, opinions, or prejudices. He may have few, he may have many, he may have more, he may have less. He may have good reasons for having them, he may have poor reasons for having them. But he has them. He is a man. And a special breed of man bereft of disbeliefs and opinions has not yet been found upon the earth. Of course, the scientific method as such has no beliefs or prejudices, but the method is not operated by a machine. It is operated by a man, and that man brings with him into the laboratory his beliefs, prejudices, and opinions.

Any method, and that includes the scientific method, is subject to the frailties of the human beings who use it. There is abundant evidence that scientists are indeed human beings, that they do take their prejudices with them into their research rooms. Any one who deals with scientists knows this and can give sufficient proof to support the contention. Among scientists themselves it is common knowledge that some advances or new theories have been squelched because of the opinions of a reviewer for a scientific journal. This is just as true among the higher echelon of scientists as it is among the lower. This is not to say that scientists are particularly bad individuals. It is just to say that the scientific method is no more objective than the person carrying out the study. Thus, an appeal to the scientific method because of its objectivity is indefensible. Scientists are afflicted with the weaknesses of the human race.

IT IS encouraging to note that there is a tendency afoot among scientists to be more realistic about the description of the scientific method and its operation. A few years ago Dr. J. B. Conant, former president of Harvard University, delivered a series of four lectures at Columbia University, (*Modern Science and Modern Man,* Doubleday, 1953). In these lectures we have, it seems to me, a rather sensible evaluation of the so-called scientific method.

According to Dr. Conant, what is now so frequently referred to as the scientific method is really nothing new. Instead it is a product of the advances of learning in general. Human activities may be characterized as being abstract or empirical. Abstraction has been practiced for some time. Early in human history men began to think about nature and to develop certain theories, hypotheses, or ideas about it. Much of the work of the ancient philosophers was of this type, as was the work in Mathematics, such as that of Euclid. Even though some of the ideas proposed by these ancients and others who worked along similar lines were of little or no permanent value, still they were useful in the general advance of learning. As more and mo of these ideas were suggested, an increasing amou of attention was paid to them. As a result, so ideas were discarded, others modified, and new on suggested. Thus did man begin to think about h environment and develop ideas as to its nature a effects.

But there was another type of activity also — th empirical. Here man, accidentally or otherwis learned how to use parts of nature in new way In one way or another in the early morning human history man learned how to produce bra and other metals from rocks or dirt which he foun In some such way methods were found to produc glass. These methods, of course, were crude, b in this way also man was learning about natur round about him.

Then at about the time of Galileo, says D Conant, these two types of human activity becam rather closely allied. The theories of the philos phers, we may say, could be tested while the artisa or empiricist began to profit from the ideas c matter and the mathematical relationships su gested by the philosophers. But even then progres was slow measured by present-day standards. Idea could be tested or applied only when there was equip ment to do so. Methods had to be provided fo measuring or weighing. New forces such as elec tricity were discovered and put to use.

Today we profit from the combined effect of thi cumulative effort. Methods are available for exac measurement. Temperatures and humidities can b controlled. Excellent and efficient methods are avai able for generating electricity. The experimenta equipment is now available to man. And, accord ing to Dr. Conant, the scientific method has reall become a fusion of the activities of the "philos opher" and the artisan, aided by an imposing arra of devices and gadgets.

The scientific method, then, is not something ne or revolutionary. It is a result of the age-old desir of man to find out what he can about the universe We may say that all fields of endeavor have gon into the making of this method.

BUT DR. CONANT has more to say abou Science. He seeks to evaluate the results of recen developments in ideas concerning the universe an matter. What difference, for example, does th uncertainty principle of Heisenberg make? Wha is implicit in the use of quantum mechanics? Ther are some interesting consequences.

The uncertainty principle states that we can' know everything about, say, an electron. As i commonly stated, if we know its velocity by meas urement we are uncertain of its location at tha instant. The smaller the particle under study be

omes, the greater is the extent of this uncertainty. This means then that as the scientist seeks to get more information about smaller particles, his information will be increasingly inexact. It may be that eventually man will find himself at a loss in trying to determine the ultimate structure of matter. Prof. Bridgman has stated it as follows: "The new insight comes from a realization that the structure of nature may eventually be such that our processes of thought do not correspond to it sufficiently to permit us to think about it at all. We are now approaching a bound beyond which we are forever stopped from pushing out inquiries, not by the construction of the world, but by the construction of ourselves. The world fades out and eludes us because it becomes meaningless. We have reached the limit of the vision of the great pioneers of science, the vision, namely, that we live in a sympathetic world, and that it is comprehensible by our minds" ("Philosophical Implications of Physics" in American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Bulletin*, III, 5, Feb. 1950).

Putting this in another way, some scientists now openly say that we cannot say that matter or the world is like this or like that. At best we can but say that our experience suggests that matter can be or may be represented as constituted thus and thus. As more experience is accumulated, this way of representing matter will also be altered.

Is the scientist, then, out of touch with reality? What then of the vaunted scientific method? Prof. J. J. Thomson, a man who made significant contributions to the early study of the atom, said: "From the point of view of the physicist, a theory of matter is a policy rather than a creed; its object is to connect or coordinate apparently diverse phenomena and above all to suggest, stimulate, and direct experiment" (*Corpuscular Theory of Matter*, 1907).

Here we have the scientist coming down to earth. He does not expect to find out all there is to know. He is becoming aware of the finiteness of man. He is willing to admit that there are bounds beyond which he cannot go. He is satisfied that the scientific method cannot answer all questions. He is willing to say as Dr. Conant does: "We must regard scientific theories as guides to human action and thus an extension of common sense" (*op cit.* p. 101).

Pages From the Past

For the Centennial Year — a collection of contemporary accounts and documents which reflect something of the origins and developing life of the Christian Reformed Church. Selected and edited by Dr. George Stob.

The Union with the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church

After Dr. I. N. Wyckoff's visit to the Holland colony (cf. report by Wyckoff in July-August issue of *The Reformed Journal*), the ministers and elders of the Holland Colony held another meeting. Out of this meeting came a written document, dated July 10, 1849, with the following very long title:

Principal Content of what was Transacted in a Gathering of the Preachers and some Elders of the Dutch Colony in Michigan, Held on the 4th of June, 1849, *in Holland, Ottawa County, Michigan, and Occasioned by some questions of Investigation Proposed by Dr. Wyckoff of Albany, Delegated for that Purpose by the Synodical Meeting of the Reformed Churches in North America.*

This document does not make mention of the fear and hesitancy with which the colonists responded to Dr. Wyckoff's proposal, nor of his statement that if they found the "ecclesiastical connection" unprofitable, they might bid "a fraternal adieu, and be by themselves again." This document does state, however, that the colonists seek the closest possible union with the Church of God wherever it may be manifest on earth, if so be, that it knows and professes the way of salvation. How much more, then, do we feel at one with those churches which possess the same expression of faith, the same form of government, and the same liturgy which we possess, and which desire publicly to defend God's truth against the lie. We have never viewed ourselves otherwise than as part of the Dutch Reformed Church, and therefore we desire to live in fellowship with those churches and wish to send our delegates to their ecclesiastical assemblies. (Quoted in D. H. Kromminga, *The Christian Reformed Tradition*, p. 104).

From this it appears that a specific expression of interest in "closest possible union" with the Dutch Reformed Church was current, and in written form, as early as July 1849. The union with the Dutch Reformed Church was consummated in June 1850. The union was not accomplished, therefore, with as little preparation

and as precipitately as Prof. G. K. Hemkes indicates in his book, *Het Rechtsbestaan der Holl. Chr. Geref. Kerk*, p. 51.

It must be said, however, that the process by which Classis Holland came to the decision to unite with the Dutch Reformed Church is very obscure. The meeting of July 10, 1849, was not an official gathering of Classis Holland. The next recorded meeting of Classis Holland, that of October 31, 1849, makes no mention whatsoever either of Dr. Wyckoff's visit or of any proposal of union with the Dutch Reformed Church.

No official action on the matter of the union was taken by Classis Holland until its meeting of April 1850. It is impossible to determine the exact nature and intent of this action, since the minutes of the Classis meeting of April 1850 were lost. To make up for this loss in part, the following item was copied, over the signature of the Rev. S. Bolks, as President, in the minute book of Classis Holland:

It seemed good to the church to send a representative to the Particular Synod of the Old Holland Reformed Churches in America, with the following commission:

L. S.

The overseers of the Church of Jesus Christ, of the Classis of Holland, in Ottawa, Michigan, wish the brethren, the overseers of the church of our Lord, known as the Dutch Reformed Church, and assembled in one of the sections of New York State, in order to promote the welfare of that portion of the flock of Christ,

> Grace and Peace, from God the Father, in the Son, through the Holy Ghost.

In consideration of the precious and blessed unity of the church of God, and the clearly declared will of our Savior that they all should be one; as well as the need which the particular parts of the whole have of one another — especially we, who feel our weakness and insignificance — our hearts thirst for fellowship with the beloved Zion of God.

Since the day that we stepped ashore in this new world, our hearts have been strengthened and encouraged by meeting the people of God. The children of God are all dear to us, living in their respective denominations, but in guiding and caring for the interests of our congregations we find ourselves best at home where we are privileged to find our own confessional standards and the fundamental principles of our church government. Thus it was gratifying to us to experience from the other side no narrow exclusiveness, but open, hearty brotherly love. This awakens in us a definite desire to make manifest our fellowship, and to ask for the hand of brotherly fellowship in return.

For these reasons we have resolved to send as our representative to your church assembly, which in the near future is to be held in the neighborhood of Albany, one of our brethren, namely, A. C. Van Raalte, pastor, and minister in the church God, instructing him in our name to give and ask for all necessary information which may fac itate the desired union.

For him and for your meeting we pray that the may be granted you in abundant measure, from o glorified Head and Mediator, who is seated on t throne of God, provided with rich and blood-boug gifts, that Holy Ghost whom He left behind as t Comforter, in order that there may be granted the flock, from the fulness of eternal life, what necessary that she shall be enabled to glorify t Triune God.

In the name of the Classical Assembly of t Classis of Holland, held in the month of April, the year of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1850.

Holland, Ottawa, Mich.,

(Signed) S. Bolks, *President*

(*Classis Holland, Minutes* 1848-1858, pp. 36, 37 (These minutes, to which reference will be ma again, were translated by a Joint Committee of t Christian Reformed Church and the Reforme Church in America, and published by the Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Company.)

The "request of the Western brothers" to be accept into the Particular Synod of Albany of the Reform Protestant Dutch Church, came before the Particul Synod of Albany, meeting in the Spring of 1850 Schenectady, New York. The following action was tak by this assembly:

After deliberation the Synod adopted the follow ing resolution:

Since, in due order, a request is presented by th Classis of Holland, in Michigan, to be accepted in the membership of this Synod, therefore

Resolved, that in view of the particular circun stances in the case, this body gives its approval t the action of the aforementioned Classis of Ho land, with reference to the manner in which sh has been organized, and refers the question of he acceptance to the General Synod as also the que tion as to which Particular Synod she shall belon to. (From a report in *The Christian Intelligence* May 1, 1850, quoted in Dutch translation in Hemke *op. cit.*, p. 47).

A more complete and more detailed account of wha took place in the meeting of the Particular Synod of A bany was given by Van Raalte, the delegate of Classi Holland, in his report to the October 30, 1850, meetin of Classis Holland. Van Raalte reported, in part:

Questions from both sides were answered to ou mutual satisfaction, which made known our at tachment to God's truth, as it is expressed in ou confessional formulas, and to the Reformed Churc order; as well as our desire for church union wit one another. There was a great deal of debate be

ween those who differed in their views with regard to the process of union; that is, whether we ould be received as an already organized classis according to my commission) or should be received as separate members or churches, with the dea of being then organized into a Classis, by the Particular Synod, in accordance with their church egulations; as also on the question whether our ction in organizing ourselves into a Classis was awful or not, by what process an ecclesiastical body that made application for union ought to be received, and how the body that now made application ought to be regarded.

After this debate had continued a long time, they begged that the representative of the Classis of Holland would not look upon the discussion as evidence that there was any objection to the ecclesiastical union, with which, on the contrary, all were heartily pleased: for which cause they offered us the right hand of fellowship with their whole heart, and themselves also were eager for the union.

Since there was difference of opinion as to the form of union, they desired to bring the point in dispute before the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of the United States. The resolution so far to recognize the Classis of Holland and to seek the judgment of the General Synod with regard to the process of union, was unanimously carried. (*Classis Holland, Minutes,* 1848-1858, pp. 39, 40).

When this matter was presented to the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, meeting in June 1850, it was referred to a committee of the General Synod. This committee offered the following report and recommendation, which was adopted by the General Synod:

This Classis comprises nine organized churches, with an average of one hundred members each, and enjoys the services of six ministers. The individuals of whom these churches are composed, are emigrants from Holland, who, driven by the combined influence of temporal necessity, produced by onerous taxation and an over-crowded population, and a grievous interference with their rights of conscience, have taken refuge in this land of the free. By their orderly and industrious habits, and especially by their consistent and exemplary Christian demeanor, they have already, in their new home, won for themselves high commendation and given earnest of taking rank with the soundest and best portions of the community. Descended from the same time-honored Church through which, in her palmier days, the Reformed Dutch Church of North America derived her cherished religious institutions and privileges, it was to be expected that we should naturally care for these exiles from the fatherland. They have accordingly been received with a cordial and liberal sympathy, in New York, Buffalo, Detroit, and all other places to which they have come. Strangers, in a strange land, beloved for their own and for their fathers' sakes, they are entitled to a cordial welcome into the ecclesiastical fellowship which they solicit, and all suitable aid in their establishment in the home of their choice.

Thereupon, the following recommendations of the Committee were adopted:

1. *Resolved,* That the Classis of Holland be received under the care of the General Synod, and that it be connected with the Particular Synod of Albany.

2. *Resolved,* That the religious condition and necessities of the Holland emigrants, wherever they are dispersed throughout our country, be commended to the particular attention of the Board of Domestic Missions. (*Acts and Proceedings* of the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, June 1850, Art. VII, pp. 68, 69).

The union of Classis Holland with the "Old Dutch Church of North America," seemed to be a source of considerable gratification to both Classis Holland and the Dutch Reformed Church. This will appear from the following documents, the first of which is a letter written by Van Raalte to the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church at the behest of Classis Holland, and the second of which is the General Synod's reply.

Van Raalte's letter said:

In relation to our union with the Old Holland Church of North America, which is to us a source of joy and gratitude, it was *resolved* (by our Classis) that it is our duty to cherish the same cordially and tenderly. Although, on account of want of pecuniary means, it is difficult for our delegates to attend on the ecclesiastical assemblies, it is desirable that we should, by letters, make known to these ecclesiastical assemblies the feelings of Classis Holland. By this means they may understand that we cherish feelings of love and brotherly communion, and desire that the union may be more closely and cordially cemented. The ready reception and hearty introduction of us into church fellowship excited in us gladness and great respect, and as they stood in strong contrast with the contempt, oppression, and rejection which we experienced in the Netherlands, it could not but produce a beneficial impression upon our hearts. This respect and love are greatly increased, when we take into consideration that we possess nothing which can in any way recommend us. Our strong adherence to the articles of the Confession, the doctrines of the Reformation, the distinctive Catechism of the Reformed Churches, and the Canons of the synod of Dordt, which was in the Netherlands a cause of contempt, oppression, and rejection, has here opened for us a large place in your hearts. We cherish the humble desire not to prove unworthy

Pages from the Past — Continued

of the confidence reposed in us, but to conduct ourselves, according to our calling, as an ornament to the Dutch Reformed Church, seeking earnestly the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbors. For this end we entreat the intercessions of the Church, and her beneficent care over us, especially in regard to the education of our youth.

(Signed) A. C. Van Raalte

(Translation of a *Report* of Classis Holland, Michigan, in *Report of the Board of Domestic Missions,* Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, June 1851, Appendix, p. 33. Cf. also *Classis Holland, Minutes,* April 30, 1851, Art. 9, pp. 52, 53, where the resolution of Classis Holland, in the same substance, is recorded.)

This letter came to the attention of the next General Synod. At this Synod the Committee on the State of Religion reported having received "a most gratifying letter . . . from the Rev. A. C. Van Raalte, in behalf of Classis Holland, communicating the feelings cherished by that body toward the General Synod." Thereupon the General Synod

Resolved, That the Synod has been highly gratified by the communication from Rev. Mr. Van Raalte, in behalf of the Classis of Holland; that we reciprocate the kind feelings expressed; th we trust the union they have formed with us w be of lasting mutual benefit; and that we comme them to the Head of the Church for His blessi (*Acts and Proceedings,* General Synod, Reform Protestant Dutch Church, June 1851, Art. VI, p 147, 149).

It appeared, therefore, that the union of the immigra church of Classis Holland, with the long established Du Reformed Church in America would be highly saluta for all concerned. The union would facilitate the integ tion of Classis Holland into the life and challenge of th new homeland, and would at the same time bring n life and vigor into the already thoroughly Americani Dutch Reformed Church in America.

The union did not meet with the favor of all the imm grants, however. It soon became apparent that the la mind to which Van Raalte gave expression — with concern for "the precious and blessed unity of the chu of God," its love for "the children of God. . . living their respective denominations," and its urgent desire "the closest possible union with the Church of Go especially "with those churches which possess the sa expression of faith, the same form of government, a the same liturgy" — was not the mind of all the imm grants. It also became apparent that the union was r "a source of joy and gratitude" to all, nor did all "cheri the same cordially and tenderly."

This dissatisfaction with the union with the Dut Reformed Church, and the Secession to which it led Western Michigan, will be exhibited in other documen which will appear in the pages of *The Reformed Journ*

The Christian and the World According to Bavinck

by Bastian Kruithof

R. H. STRACHAN in his book, *The Historic Jesus in the New Testament,* writes, "It is impossible for a Christian who thinks at all, to have Christ in his heart and to keep Him out of the universe." With that statement Bavinck's teachings on the relation of Christianity and culture, or on the relation of the Christian to the world, fully agree.

Bavinck, the careful scholar, irenic Christian, and simple child of God, has high regard for the true, the good, and the beautiful wherever he finds these. Revelation at its best presents them to the discerning heart and mind which by divine grace feel somewhat at home in this world because it is God's. Special revelation illumines general revelation, giving the Christian the perspective of eternity, sharpening all his senses for the evaluation all that God has done, is doing, and will do in th fulfilling of His eternal purpose. That way th Christian feels at home, not simply in the univers but under the arch of the Eternal. Under Go man and the world have their richest meaning Any denial of them, any indifference toward the can only impoverish the Christian cause.

Bavinck's appreciation is evident from such word as these: "Without doubt we may enrich ourselve with the glorious forms of beauty which Greec and Rome have saved for us. For all is ours if w are Christ's; not only Paul and Cephas and Apollo but also Homer and Horace, Demosthenes an Cicero" (*De Welsprekendheid,* pp. 78, 79).

Such an ecstatic statement does not imply that reece and Rome will ultimately satify us; it does, owever, suggest that we as Christians had better ractise the art of listening to whatever is worth earing. Bavinck is always a good listener, a better stener, and the best because he is always alert to what God has to say both in the Word and in the world. It is his mission to arouse us to that fundamental awareness.

He is critical as well as appreciative. In the realm f pagan thought the revelation of God's grace in Christ is absent. For that reason the pagan mind annot grasp the meaning of man in the world. He s critical of Medieval thinking which did not resolve the dualism of nature and grace; of the rationalism of the Enlightenment with its leap from knowledge to faith; of positivism which with its unscientific scientism could not escape its own metaphysics.

He is also critical of Anabaptism and the Anabaptistic strain found in his own group and among us today.

The Negative of Anabaptism

According to Bavinck both Socinians and Anabaptists separate the natural from the supernatural, the human from the divine, as irreconcilable. But whereas Socinianism sacrifices grace to nature, Anabaptism sacrifices nature to grace (*Gereformeerde Dogmatiek,* I, pp. 181, 182). The latter "proceeded from the strict opposition of creation and recreation, nature and grace, world and Kingdom of God, and therefore considered believers as people who became something entirely different in regeneration and who consequently must live lives separated from the world. Its program was not reformation but separation; it wanted an isolated church" (*G.D.* IV, pp. 314, 315).

All sects make for dualism. Cut off from the church and despising theology, they have lost their influence upon their age and their tie to culture (*G.D.,* I, p. 652).

Bavinck, however, is disturbed not only about sects, but about the sectarian spirit with Anabaptistic tendencies in his own communion and in the Protestant evangelical churches in other lands. There have been Christians, and there are still many of them, without a conception of the Gospel's significance for the natural life, for family, society, and state, for science, and art. Many of these have thought, many are thinking, that re-creation is hostile to creation, that grace destroys nature, and that he is the best and most consecrated Christian who withdraws from the world and shuts himself up in solitude (*De Offerande des Lofs,* p. 69).

Bavinck admits there is a truth in their reasoning that cannot be denied. Jesus came to take upon Himself natural life only to deny it and lay it down on the cross. He was not married, had no vocation, no office in the state. He was neither scientist nor artist. His entire life was an offering. He came to die. He asked His disciples to walk in His footsteps in a life of self-denial. Jesus was no statesman nor reformer; His Gospel is not a social program; Scripture is not a handbook for art or science; preaching is not man's wisdom. Says Emile Cailliet in *The Christian Approach to Culture,* "Culture *qua* culture was not within the perspective of his mission." And Emil Brunner writes rather strongly, "[Jesus] does not seem to betray any interest in any of those things which we include under the terms civilization or culture" (*Christianity and Civilization,* I, p. 7).

Bavinck, however, maintains that Christianity, far from opposing the world of culture, lays down the basic principles upon which a genuine culture can thrive. The principles are found in Scripture, in the Old and New Testaments. The teachings of Jesus and His Apostles are rich for culture, and the Christian era has proved it. The convictions of Tolstoy in his later years are a one-sided emphasis. Of Jesus, Bavinck says that He considered nothing human strange. He ate and drank and rejoiced with people. He honored the ordering of natural life, for He came not to break down the works of the Father, but of the devil. Jesus counseled obedience to authority. He also loved nature with childlike joy, drawing many of His illustrations from that realm. He did not refuse costly ointment for His anointing. Moreover, Jesus laid down His natural life only to take it up again in His resurrection. "The bodily resurrection of Christ is the decisive proof that Christianity is not hostile to anything human or natural but only desires to save creation from all that is sinful and to sanctify it perfectly unto God" (*De Offerande des Lofs,* p. 74). His followers must walk in that realization.

Richard Niebuhr in his book, *Christ and Culture,* calls the position of anticultural Christianity both necessary and inadequate. Bavinck's teachings agree with that. Says Niebuhr, "In history these Christian withdrawals from and rejections of the institutions of society have been of very great importance to both church and culture. They have maintained the distinction between Christ and Caesar, between revelation and reason, between God's will and man's" (pp. 66, 67).

Though culture was not the first mission of Jesus Christ, yet His redemptive revelation is aimed also at the transformation of culture in its rich and varied fields. The Father's world is not to be despised but to be cherished.

Christianity and the World –Continued

Throughout all his writings Bavinck carries this thought expressed jubilantly in one of his popular works, *De Offerande des Lofs,* "The Christian is the best citizen. With his confession he does not stand outside of nor over against the natural life. But high and spiritedly he carries it into the world and plants the banner of the Cross everywhere. The Gospel of Christ is glad tidings for all creatures, for mind and heart, for soul and body, for family and society, for science and art. For it saves from guilt and frees from death" (p. 76).

Bavinck on Calvin's Views

Bavinck was profoundly influenced by Calvin. The appeal of the Reformer lay in his strong personal faith, in his razor-like mind, in his subjecting himself to the Word of God, and in his application of this revelation to the whole of life. His emphasis on the Absolute Sovereignty of God placed all the content of time in the light of eternity.

Calvin poured the splendor of God over all the earthly and placed the entire natural life in that ideal light. He protected capital rents, defended the rights of commerce, called art, science, and philosophy rich gifts of God, established in Geneva a school for literary, philosophical, and theological studies, and knew how to relate intimately the earthly and heavenly calling. The influence of that is felt to this day among Protestant people.

In explanation of Calvin's teachings, Bavinck writes:

> [The entire world] is an instrument, an organ, a toy in the hand of His will to honor His name. In this whole world each creature and every circle of life takes its own place, heaven and earah, plant and animal, man and angel, family, state, society, vocation, science, and art. They are all differentiated according to the divine will which works according to wisdom and election; they all have their own nature and law. But in their differentiation they are one because they have their origin in the same divine will and are all, consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, serviceable to the glorifying of God's virtue (*Johannes Calvijn,* p. 18).

All the riches of creation are ordained of God. In obedience to the Father's will Christ renounced all these for a time, but by means of His resurrection He claimed them again as purified of all sin and consecrated through the Spirit. Creation, incarnation, and resurrection are the fundamental facts of Christianity, and they are at the same time the bulwarks against all error in life and doctrine (*Calvin and the Reformation,* pp. 100, 101).

The secret of Calvin is revealed in his crest: the burning heart in the extended hand with the inscription: "My heart I give to Thee, Lord, promptly and sincerely." It is the flaming hea that we find in his *Institutes of the Christian Re gion,* in his sermons, letters, and commentari Regeneration fed the springs of his life. He kn that God redeems man completely — his knowir his willing, his feeling, his acting, his believi which undergirds them all. That convicti sparks his logic and reveals his trusting and re soning heart.

For him the Christian hope is certainly *jense ig,* for we are but pilgrims and strangers here loc ing for the City whose Builder and Maker is Gc But we are also co-laborers here working on th City. The Christian hope must likewise be t yeast of the *diesseitig.* Eschatology implies bo coming and becoming.

It is understood in the burning heart. And that sign Bavinck continued.

The Divine Purpose

Throughout Bavinck's thinking there is wov his preoccupation with God's purpose as to ma and the world. "God is busy doing great thin in these times" (*Modernisme en Orthodoxie,* 11). God's purpose forms the substance of t whole problem of Christianity's relation to cultur of man's task in the world. Man, created by Gc and living in His inescapable presence, must b lieve, worship, think, labor, serve in whatev sphere he finds himself and do it all to the glory God. There is a glory not only in the scholar study, but also in the work of one's hands. God also over and in the commonplace. This concep was announced by Scripture long before it was a plied by Wordsworth, Burns, and the Dutc painters.

Communion with God is fundamental and mus be persistent. But along with communion there also the divine communication which puts conten into the Christian's life. He is and must becom more and more the believer, thinker, and doer fc God's sake. That way he also serves his fellow men best. That way the human pilgrimage be comes meaningful.

For the child of God history has its prologue i heaven and its epilogue in the new heavens and th new earth. But origin and destiny must illumin man's place in the world and inspire his swif days. As image-bearer of God he is also, by divin grace, lord of creation. Far from despising tha lordship, he must assume it and fulfill his calling

He can do that because Jesus Christ came not t condemn the world, but to save it. Sin and th resulting ignorance drives a wedge between th natural and the spiritual. But God has never hon ored the divorce. It is His purpose that creatio shall issue in re-creation.

Introducing Okke Jager

by John Vriend

WHEN A REFORMED MINISTER still in his twenties publishes his fifth book,* having the daring title *Interview met de Tijdgeest* (or: Interviewing the Temper of These Times), and shows himself a capable essayist of broad and remarkably mature insights, it is time for other Reformed young men, on whatever continent they may live, to sit up, take notice, and think a few long thoughts. Not that one should now lament the absence of Okke Jagers in Christian Reformed circles: in the presence of so priceless a combination of poet and preacher not lamentation but rejoicing should ring from our walls. Besides, I am willing to have my ears twisted if I am wrong in saying, quite apodictically, that the American-Reformed environment is incapable, because too diffuse and featureless, of giving sufficient focus to a young man's talents for him to find his voice, say, in his twenties. A few of us may be roused to form a club, a few pages of protest may be pooled to form a brochure, but not many months later we disband and decide to wait for a clearer and more trustworthy crystallization of thought. But there is still too much future left to be bitter and there are too many ripe plums to pick elsewhere to feel impoverished.

Involuntarily there comes to one's mind the name of another Reformed young man who more than a century ago, when he was likewise in his twenties, raised his "Objections to the Spirit of this Age." A comparison of Da Costa's title: *Bezwaren . . .* and Jager's: *Interview . . .* indicates a changed tone of voice: a change which is doubtlessly symptomatic of the fact that, however iconoclastic a young man may be in his attitude to the idols of his age, however eager to cast out the demons of his day, he will inevitably reflect the very temper of the times with which he is in conflict. Let no one think, however, that Jager, in proving the spirits of our century, whether they are of God, makes any more concessions than Da Costa. His tone is not as loud — he is himself a modern — but his thrust is no less incisive. We may be glad of it; it is only modernity that can function as modernity's critic and no needling is a sharp as the needling of a lover. Should someone still fear that Jager is adding his weight to a deadening irenicism let him listen to his anguished cry that though the nineteenth century crucified the Christ, our century has buried him, and that indifference is not a quirk, a character trait, a matter of disposition or of age or of environment, but *sin*.

When Okke Jager himself was interviewed recently by the Dutch daily *Trouw* and questioned about his position as poet and preacher he opened his heart approximately in this vein. The poet will prevent the preacher from attempting to move tons of truth on the conveyor-belt of a cliche-laden language. He will help direct the preacher's eye toward the colorful cubism of the New Jerusalem awaiting its descent to earth. And the preacher must gently tug at the poet's sleeve from time to time in order that the golden hints of a hidden world of beauty may not prove too intoxicating for him to busy his mind with the miseries of men. It is not pure loss to the poet, in spite of his instinctive recoil from it, to have some of his work rung to shreds by the imperious telephone of the preacher. The two will doubtless irritate each other on occasion; but if both are convinced that beauty and holiness are twins, though not necessarily identical twins, they can be immeasurably helpful to each other.

Okke Jager is modestly aware of these advantages. He allows the poet in him to remain close to the microphone of the preacher. And the preacher does not cease to whisper bits of God-breathed wisdom into the ears of the poet. He is aware, too, of the failings of both preacher and poet. He complains somewhere (in *Worden als een Kind*) that the blinding brilliance of vitalist poetry had for the moment quite destroyed his appetite for the Living Word. He knows that immersion in the scintillating waters of modern literature, however delightful to the poet, may mute the mouth of the preacher. But conversely, when the preacher, growing dull with cumulative care, loses sight of the broad dimensions of God's Kingdom, there is the Spirit-born laughter and song of the poet to catapult him onward and upward. Okke Jager is one of the few men — how good of God to plant them in his vineyard! — whose sermons are works of art and whose works of art are sermons without either sermon or poem ceasing to be itself.

In his *Interview . . .* there are a few paragraphs noteworthy for their playfulness rather than for their profundity. But in a world of solemn sinners it is surely a sign of profundity to know how to be playful. In order that the reader may catch the flavor of the whole and judge for himself of its

*The first four: *Poezie en Religie, Worden als een Kind, De Humor van de Bijbel, Onder Gods Hoogtezon.* The volume here discussed has just come off the presses of J. H. Kok, at Kampen. 168 pages. Price f. 4.95 or $1.31.

Okke Jager — Continued

merits I shall now present some translated tidbits from the book itself.

Excerpts from Interview met de Tijdgeest

On Faith and Furniture

John envisions the holy City in the shape of a cube: rectangular lines and sharp corners. The form of the cube is symbolic of the spaciousness, openness, and candor of this City. . . . Hence as Christians we must be grateful that the frilly and florid extravangance [of a former day] is being banished from the home. The severe lines and clear colors of modern furniture fit the Christian faith. Some may smile at this "naive" combination of faith and furniture; but he who knows what *faith* is knows too that faith interpenetrates the whole of life. Faith must be able to create a style of its own: — show me your furniture and I shall tell you who you are.

The cube of the holy City must be reflected in our living rooms. Clarity, simplicity, and rest go hand in hand with [our] faith. A mood of restfulness must dominate in our rooms. Without hanging biblical plaques on the walls we can still make them say: "One thing is needful" and "he that believeth shall not be in haste" and "I shall give you rest." It always strikes one as preposterous when in the midst of a confusion of pictures and portraits on flowered wallpaper a space has been reserved for the curlicued letters of "Rest, my soul, thy God is king."

But though our faith must become tangible even in our tables, this does not mean that a simple table is proof now that those who sit by it are the poor in spirit. We are so deceitful that we handily turn matters around. Because honesty must be expressed in honest furniture we let our honest furniture be heralds of our honesty. . . . The thought of Jerusalem is necessary . . . to remind us that we are still deceitful at this point. *It is possible that we are showing off our battle with show.* And that is today's love of ostentation. It is time that we unmask this masked idol. . . . (From the essay on *Pronkzucht,* p. 122)

Out of sympathy for the young people who Sunday after Sunday are made the objects of large inhuman blocks of boredom called "sermons," and in solidarity with the people who "deliver" them, Okke Jager also devotes a chapter to

Youth and Sermons

. . . Another reason for the disappointment of young people consists in the remarkable fact that we ministers frequently follow just the homiletical rules which are not important. All sorts of formal rules about theme and divisions are strictly observed but the genuinely important is forgotten: that we must not introduce the truth "with the heavy end first" (Fontenelle); that a thing makes a far bigger impression when it is approached from an unexpected angle; that "great grief sinks in much less deeply when viewed directly in the face than when looked at through the peephole of some incidental detail" (Vinet); that "one must not needlessly resort to formal description but as much as possible shape things in the form of . . . a discussion" (Vinet); that one must continually draw the audien into the sermon as if they too are busy constructi it, asking questions and raising objections; that o must remind the members of a congregation of m ments which were personally significant for the at one time; that Jesus Christ must not merely proclaimed but also portrayed — so vividly that seems he is being crucified anew before our eye that it is better to convey the impression that o feels more that he says than that he says more tha he feels; that people listen less the louder we shou that a speaker's confidence in his own words mak his audience feel at ease too; that a minister mu not, out of humility, so minimize his own sermo that he no longer feels like delivering it but that h may without qualms feel happy about his own se mon provided he knows that he really did not mak it himself; that on Sunday evening he may neve say "Glad it's over with" and that on Sunday morn ing he should be impatiently eager to ascend th pulpit; that the Jews were struck especially by th tone of *authority* with which Jesus spoke and tha in this day we must not drop this tone but rathe in this respect take a leaf out of the Roman Catholi book; that our sermons bear so little resemblance t the fearless . . . language of the prophets; that ever preacher must always remember: there may be on member of my audience who is hearing the Gosp for the last time and there may be one who is hea ing it for the first time. . . . (From the essay o *Jeugd en Preek,* p. 35)

Modern writers have had much to say about the value and horrors of being alone. Naturalists like Thoreau hav regarded the hours of solitude the finest companions of a But others have spoken of "small weatherbeaten suitcase left on a station platform" in description of their unhapp solitary selves. There was the solitariness our Lord sough out to be with his Father; and there was the solitarines he suffered in the absence of his Father. John the Baptis lived in the desert surrounded by a legion of angels; th Gadarene madman dwelt among skulls and skeletons pos sessed by a legion of devils. Both were alone — but wha a difference! On the subject of "one-someness" Okke Jage writes two essays, from the first of which I have selecte the following lines.

Love and Loneliness

The loneliness of man began when Adam an Eve saw each other with the peels and pits of th forbidden fruit in their hands. Two stranger looked at each other with a wild surmise from op posite sides of a bridgeless ravine.

It was only a short time ago when man, in ex pressing his first judgment about his fellowman had been exactly right: "This is now flesh of m flesh!"

Adam had not first glanced distrustfully at Eve he did not ask suspiciously: "Who are you? Wha do you want?" Nor had he made the proposal "Let us first get somewhat acquainted with each other." He had not waited until she made a move There was no engagement-period. They were mar ried on the spot. Now that was truly love at firs sight. If there had been no sin all love would have been love at first sight. Adam had not been frightened when, as he woke up, he had suddenly seen Eve stand by him; nor had he asked himself what she would think of him or whether he was making a good impression on her or how he could best approach her. No — he had stretched out his arms to her, and a cry of joy had echoed through

Paradise and was caught up by the song birds in the tree of life: "This now is flesh of my flesh! You are mine and I am yours!" — and that same moment they were married and the Lord himself solemnized the marriage under a dome of blue.

But the moment they stretched out their arms to the branches of the forbidden tree, they let go of each other. The moment they became disobedient the lightning struck between them. (From the essay on *Eenzaamheid,* p. 97)

It is plain that not all of these essays were written in high indignation at the dominant powers of the day. They were all of them, however, written by a sensitive Christian spirit in touch with the times.

Notes and Letters . . .

(*Continued from page* 2)

the history of the world that two religions officially received equal right in the same state. This was the work of William of Orange and Marnix, later approved by Beza according to Groen. They were supported by about thirty Holland and Zeeland and other cities.

The second book has extensive quotations from the primary sources to prove that the Anabaptists were perfectionists and antinomians. This is not a legend. Kuyper in *E Voto, IV* (see Index) and Bavinck in his Dogmatics, Vol. IV (see Index) are of the same opinion, and so is Westerbeek Van Eerten. Calvin calls them Montanists (perfectionists).

Both books are out of print. But they can be ordered second hand from Bouma's Boekhuis in Groningen. They are in the Calvin College Library.

As to the great majority of the Anabaptists being rebels, about ten thousand of them on their way to Munster in 1535 were caught by the police and sent home. They had swords, spears, knives, and small guns with them at the advice of Jan Van Leyden! "Only after the fall of Munster the remnant of the crushed Anabaptists were willing to listen" (Dosker, *The Dutch Anabaptists,* Vol. VII, p. 103. Compare *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandia*). Menno Simonsz was never an Antinomian or a revolutionary, nor most of his followers (Dosker, p. 94). Also quiet were the Swiss Anabaptists and Melchior Hofmann in Germany. The very first Dutch Anabaptists were under the influence of Hofmann for about one year (1531). But soon Jan Matthijs at Amsterdam, Jan Van Leyden at Leyden, and travelling David Jorisz made a plea for nudism and violence. And during the last months of the siege of Munster by the exiled bishop, when Jan Van Leyden called for help, thousands of new converts wanted to join him. In the Netherlands the rebel leaders tried to take Leyden and Amsterdam and two monasteries near Groningen and Bolsward. The whole country was in an uproar. The Catholic government killed the fanatic leaders by the dozens, and let the others go. This is all plain from the sources mentioned, and quoted by Westerbeek and by Dosker. The furor was something unheard of in the quiet Netherlands. Only the iconoclasm of the "Wonderful Year" (as the Germans call 1566) when 300 churches were despoiled can be compared with 1535. Both events were due to the fanatic persecutions of the Spanish inquisition, and the widespread unemployment as a secondary cause. They show to what extremes an otherwise "quiet and orderly nation" (William of Orange) may come. Oppression, says Solomon, can even make a wise man mad. But these two upheavals were exceptional (compare 1616, 1834, and 1886) when the Calvinists remained *passive*).

As to the valor of the Dutch Calvinist armies to defend liberty, may we refer to the compliments they have received from old liberals like Fruin, Van Vloten, Bakhuizen Van den Brink, Blok, Potgieter, and Busken Huet? They are quoted by Van Rijsens, and in my Dutch Anthology, pages 262 and 263. The Calvinists represented only ten per cent of the population, but they won the war for religious and civic liberty! How they applied this liberty we find in De Wilde, and in the works of the Algras, etc. For the Dutch Indies, see Johan Bavinck, *Zending in een Wereld in Nood.* He also mentions the Christian dessas (or villages) organized by modern Calvinists in Java. A wonderful record. Let us be thankful and let us not forget.

Sincerely,
Henry J. van Andel

Grand Rapids, Mich.

DEAR SIRS:

The Rev. Edgar H. Smith really gave us all a good insight into the tremendous revolution that is sweeping this part of God's world. The article "Nationalism and Christian Missions," which appeared in the July-August 1956 number of *The Reformed Journal,* should be studied prayerfully by all our mission leaders. What he has stated so well is wholly true of Ceylon. Maybe the particulars of the Ceylon situation should be shared with your readers in the future.

But for now I wanted to underscore the statement: "Mission Boards must now consider how they can adapt themselves to the new nationalism . . . Surely it is our duty to recognize the Church of Christ newly formed elsewhere . . . the home church will send out men to serve communions as counsellors . . . qualified ministers may go forth to be professors in distant seminaries."

Let some of our learned PhD's take note of this Call. Too long have we gone to Amsterdam and elsewhere and then carried our coveted prize back to Grand Rapids in the deep hope of securing a top position in our own Church and School. Have we forgotten that that little pond is not the limit of God's Church but that Christ has planted His Church across the seven seas?

The Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon needs a Professor now. For unless we found a solid seminary in Ceylon, the future for the historic Reformed Faith in this land looks terribly dark. A minister serving the Reformed Church in India told me only last Sunday that

less than 10 per cent of the men trained abroad are able to take up real leadership in the home church upon return!

Today the Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon has three students studying at Calvin College and Seminary. A fourth candidate will be interviewed at the next meeting of the General Consistory. Where shall we send him? Who will train him?

Cordially yours in Christ,
Clarence Van Ens

No. 1, Police Park Terrace, Colombo 5, Ceylon

Ideal for study groups, societies, clubs, etc.!

NEW — CENTENNIAL EDITION

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

A Study Manual — By Peter Y. De Jong

The 100th anniversary of the founding of the Christian Reformed Church is a fitting time to review her history, government, doctrine, and distinctive practices. This revised and enlarged edition of De Jong's Study Manual is designed to make this possible and profitable.

This booklet is written in clear and understandable language. It is brief and concise. It is completely up-to-date, including the decisions of the most recent synod.

This Study Manual has proved to be popular for young people's and adult study groups. It is equally suitable for individual use. It is just the booklet to hand to your neighbor, or anyone who may inquire in regard to the Christian Reformed Church. It has been widely used in mission chapel classes to acquaint new converts or inquirers with the Christian Reformed Church.

BAKER BOOK HOUSE 75c
1019 Wealthy, Grand Rapids 6, Mich.

In Parables

by Clovis G. Chappell

These 14 common-sense messages offer new directions and adventures for everyone who seeks the truth and light of Jesus' teachings. Each message is clearly outlined and illustrated, drawing spiritual truth from a parable of Jesus. $2

at all bookstores

ABINGDON PRESS

Conn Electronic Organs

AMERICA'S FINEST ELECTRONIC ORGAN
FOR CHURCH, CHAPEL, SCHOOL OR HOME

See and hear them at

HERMAN OOSTERHOUSE

Pianos, Organs, High Fidelity Phonographs, Television

1011 KALAMAZOO AVENUE, S.E. GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Open Monday, Friday and Saturday Evenings. Phone CH 5-3166

Monroe FOLDING BANQUET TABLES

Direct Prices & Discounts to Churches, Schools, Clubs, Lodges and All Organizations

MONROE TRUCKS

For storing Folding Tables and Chairs the easy, modern way. Each truck handles either tables or chairs. Construction of Truck No. TSC permits storage in limited space.

TSC Chair Truck

TSB Table Truck

WRITE FOR CATALOG, PRICES AND DISCOUNTS

THE Monroe COMPANY
154 CHURCH STREET, COLFAX, IOWA

"We know of no better volume." —The Presbyterian

An American Library Religious Books Round Table Selection

THE CHAOS OF CULTS

Newly Revised and Enlarged Edition

by J. K. VAN BAALEN

Never out of date, this authoritative study of the cults is kept current with each new printing. Now in its sixteenth printing — a completely revised and enlarged edition — *Chaos of Cults* is the most authoritative and up-to-date book on the subject published, giving the latest facts about the growth and development of fourteen major cults: SPIRITISM, MORMONISM, JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, SWEDENBORGIANISM, BUCHMANISM, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE, etc. Includes the latest utterances of the cultists themselves.

$3.50 — After Jan. 1, $3.95

THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE IN THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH

by G. C. BERKOUWER

"One of the finest and most informing books on Karl Barth ever published . . . will rate as a classic in theological interpretation for decades to come."

—Dr. Wm. E. Mueller,
Southern Baptist Theol. Sem.

"Countless, excellent clarifying insights . . . an excellent introduction to Barth's thought."

—Prof. Carl Kromminga,
Calvin Seminary

$4.95

WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO., Grand Rapids, Michigan